

221st BSB – Wiesbaden, Wackernheim, Dexheim



Photos courtesy of the 421st Medical Evacuation Battalion

Soldiers of the 421st Medical Evacuation Battalion treated and evacuated more than 7,000 patients last year, most of them in a combat zone. The unit was recently named the Army's best combat service support battalion, setting and exceeding standards while deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

421st recognized as best in Army

By Cassandra Kardeke
221st Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

It's no wonder the 421st Medical Evacuation Battalion was again recognized as the Army's Best Combat Services Support Battalion in the Lt. Gen. Ellis D. Parker Award competition — a feat the unit has accomplished eight times since the award's inception.

In the past year the unit deployed more than 300 Soldiers and 90 percent of its vehicles, evacuated more than 7,000 patients, most of them in a combat zone, flew more than 8,000 accident-free hours and lifesaving evacuation missions in nine countries on two continents.

The Parker awards were established in 1992 to honor Lt. Gen. Ellis D. Parker at his retirement. The awards recognize Parker's long association with aviation and his accomplishments in developing the Aviation Branch.

Comprised of five companies, 159th Medical Company

(Air Ambulance), 45th Medical Company (AA), 236th Medical Company (AA), 557th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance) and Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, the Wiesbaden-based 421st is the largest MEDEVAC battalion in the Army.

"Whether we're training, deployed or just doing our mission we have shown that the 421st not only meets the standard but exceeds the standard, and at times, sets the standard," said Lt. Col. Kyle Campbell, commander of the 421st.

Following their deployment to Iraq, the 159th Medical Com-



Soldiers of the 421st Medical Evacuation Battalion prepare a patient for transport out of Iraq.

pany returned home to Wiesbaden Army Airfield only to once again be deployed to Afghanistan for medical evacuation support. During the two deployments more than 50 percent of the company's Soldiers received promotions or awards, to include the Soldier's Medal.

"If anyone epitomizes what Soldiers are supposed to be like, it's these two NCOs right here," said Maj. Gen. Walter

Wojdakowski, V Corps deputy commanding general, about Staff Sgt. Eric Hartman and Sgt. Douglas Holm, during a ceremony at the airfield last October. Both received the Soldier's Medal for their actions in the medical evacuation and rescue efforts fol-

lowing the bombing of the United Nations Building in Baghdad.

But 159th Soldiers weren't the only ones in the battalion who exceeded the standard or received recognition. While deployed to Iraq, Soldiers of the 557th Medical Company traveled more than 180,000 miles supporting the mission while maintaining a 97 percent readiness rate.

"We supported 12 different

areas while there and actually set the standard for evacuations," said the company's former commander, Capt. Matthew Curlee, after a welcome home ceremony for the company in January.

Following their arrival in Iraq, 557th Soldiers found themselves to be the only Army medical evacuation company among Navy and Marine Corps personnel.

"We were put in charge of the Navy corpsmen and 10 Marine ambulances once we arrived and had no problems working hand-in-hand with each other," Curlee said. Because of the close working relationships among the troops, 24 of the company's Soldiers earned the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force patch — a first for the battalion's Soldiers.

"We couldn't have achieved this without the good personal relationships among our Soldiers. We all work well together," said Maj. Cephus Roupe, battalion executive officer.

221st BSB – Wiesbaden, Wackernheim, Dexheim



Photo by Donna Dean



Photo by Karl Weisel

Celebrating German-American friendship in Mainz

People of all nationalities fill the Mainz pedestrian streets during the city's German-American Fest April 17. A performance by a square dancing group (photo below) captures the attention of hundreds of people in front of the Mainz Cathedral. Performances by the U.S. Army Europe Soldiers Chorus (top photo) kicked off the event followed by several local bands, cheerleaders, a German gospel group and other performers. After having waited in a long line, a family cools off during the sunny day (photo above right) enjoying American-style ice cream. Photo above left: U.S. Consul General Peter W. Bodde applauds as German SWR moderator Christiane Sphon interviews Mainz Lord Mayor Jens Beutel. Although German businesses are typically closed on Sundays, city officials planned the event, allowing businesses to open their doors in order to recoup money lost when the city closed down for President George W. Bush's visit Feb. 23. The AFN Hessen radio crew were also on hand for a live broadcast during the German-American festival.



Photo by Donna Dean



Photo by Donna Dean

Employment opportunities

Child care providers

Child and Youth Services care givers are needed throughout the Wiesbaden and Dexheim communities. Call the Nonappropriated Fund Human Resource Office at mil 337-5272 or civ (0611) 705-5272 for more information or join the 221st Base Support Battalion Family Child Care program. Stay at home with your children while building a career. Providers receive free training and nationally recognized accreditation. For information call mil 338-7729 or civ (0611) 380-7729.

Civil service

The 221st Base Support Battalion is hiring a budget analyst, GS-560-11, and a temporary public affairs specialist, GS-1035-09. Apply through Resumix, online at www.chra.eur.army.mil.

DoDDS positions

Department of Defense Dependents Schools seek an accounting technician, GS-0560-12, budget analyst, GS-0525-07, and human resource specialist, GS-0201-07, target GS-09. Send resumes or an OF-171 to DoDEA, DoDDS-Europe, Attn: Personnel/Latimore, Unit 29649 Box 7100, APO AE 09096.

Maintenance workers

Rheinblick Golf Course is now hiring for outdoor maintenance personnel. Salary starts at \$8.51 per hour. For more information and to apply call mil 336-2816 or civ (0611) 420 675.

ACAP counselor

The Army Career and Alumni Program seeks a part-time ACAP counselor in Wiesbaden. Applicants must have an MA/MS in counseling, human resource management, training and development or a related field; two years counseling experience and ability to travel. Submit a

chronological resume to Hanau ACAP, Pioneer Kaserne, Building 11, Room 325 or email to hanauacap@resourceconsultants.com. For more information call mil 322-8356/8303 or civ (06181) 88-8308.

Food service workers

Food service workers are currently needed at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield, Dexheim and McCully Barracks dining facilities. Wages start at \$10.25 an hour. For more information call mil 337-7004 or civ (0611) 705-7004.

Bookkeeper

The Treasure Trove Thrift Shop in Hainerberg Housing has an immediate opening for a part-time bookkeeper. Applicant must have computer skills, knowledge of basic bookkeeping and accounting. Applications can be picked up at the thrift shop or by emailing ttrove.thrift@gmail.com. Call civ (0611) 742 61 for more information.

Custodial workers

The American Arms Hotel is hiring front desk clerks and custodial workers for housekeeping. Applicants must be U.S. citizens and can apply at the Nonappropriated Fund Personnel Office in Building 1023E at Wiesbaden Army Airfield. For more information call mil 338-7883 or civ (0611) 343 667.

Bank teller

The Wiesbaden Army Airfield Community Bank is currently accepting applications for a bank teller. Applicants should have a minimum of two years retention. Previous experience is preferred. Applications can be picked up at any Community Bank branch. For more information call civ (0611) 702 411.

Communities prepare for baby boom

Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles dealing with the recent baby boom in the Wiesbaden community. Check out the next issue of the Herald Union for an in-depth look at what to expect when you're expecting.

By Cassandra Kardeke
221st Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Just over a year ago the Wiesbaden community welcomed home Soldiers from the 3rd Corps Support Command after a year-long deployment in Iraq. Not long after that military installations throughout the 104th Area Support Group began preparing for the arrival of 1st Armored Division Soldiers from their 15-month deployment.

Now these same communities are preparing for even more arrivals — babies.

It's a well-known fact that a baby boom occurred for almost 10 years in the United States following the end of World War II and it appears the same is being noticed throughout military installations worldwide.

"We are expecting approximately 66 babies to be born in April and May and another 200 over the next six months," said Daphne Jean, obstetrics nurse at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield Health Clinic.

Whether active duty military, family member or civilian, pregnant women are being referred off the installation for care because of the demand for services at the Wiesbaden Health Clinic,

"We are expecting approximately 66 babies to be born in April and May and another 200 over the next six months." — Daphne Jean, obstetrics nurse

Landstuhl Regional Medical Center and the Heidelberg Army Hospital.

"Heidelberg is not seeing any outside area patients, and Landstuhl can only accept high-risk pregnancies, and even then it must be pretty serious because they just can't handle the influx of pregnancies right now," Jean said.

Health clinic officials and patient liaisons maintain a list of local national doctors who accept Tricare patients and have arranged with three hospitals, Horst Schmidt Klinik, Paulinen Klinik and St. Joseph's, to admit patients for delivery. Once Jean completes an initial screening, patients are referred to the patient liaison and given a list of preferred providers off post.

"Many people don't use the patient liaison, but they are there to help at any time and truly make a difference," said Katherine Turner who gave birth earlier this month.

Turner recommended women keep in touch with the patient liaison office and not hesitate to ask questions.

"There are lots of things women need to know; even the small details make a difference," Turner said referring to the night she went into labor and found the doors to St. Joseph's locked. Not knowing how to get into the hospital, she called the patient liaison for help and learned that the main entrance into the hospital is locked after 10 p.m. requiring patients to use the ambulance entrance.

"Those are the kinds of things that you don't really think about until the time comes," Turner said.

Pregnant? Recently had a baby in Germany? The 221st BSB Public Affairs Office wants to hear from you. Share your story and experiences with other soon to be moms. Send email to 221bsbpao@104asg.army.mil

Jean said many patients are apprehensive about being seen on the economy but find the care exceptional.

"So far I haven't had any complaints, and many come back later and tell me what a pleasant experience it was," Jean said.

Although going to a host nation doctor or facility can be intimidating, Jean aids the process by offering the standard pre- and post-natal vitamins and prescriptions right in her office.

"Patients don't have to wait in long lines at the pharmacy or purchase medicine off post. I can supply them with what they need to start before being seen by an OB doctor," Jean said. Patients who later receive prescriptions from a host nation physician can then have the prescription translated and pick up needed medicines from the clinic's pharmacy.

During the initial screening Jean gives all patients the book "Planning Your Pregnancy and Birth" by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists as well as referral slips to all available services such as the Women, Infants and Children-Overseas Program and the New Parent Education and Support Program.

NPESP has begun offering a series of classes to help new and soon-to-be moms understand more about their pregnancy and what to expect. The three-part series covers birth and labor, breastfeeding and post-partum/newborn care.

Following their initial visit with Jean, patients are advised to attend an OB orientation clinic held the second Tuesday of each month. They are then referred to housing if they need larger quarters and to Child and Youth Services to be placed on the waiting list for child care.

"Sometimes it takes a month or two for the news to really kick in that the patient is pregnant, so I try to walk them through the first few steps until they get the hang of things," said Jean.



Photo by Cassandra Kardeke

And they're off

Wiesbaden Cub Scouts from Pack 13 cheer on their favorite racer during the pack's annual Pine Wood Derby Race at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield Dining Facility April 2. Each year scouts in first through fifth grades are given specifications and supplies to create their own race car and compete against other scouts. To find out more about scouting activities in the Wiesbaden and Dexheim communities send email to lonesomeduckhalf@yahoo.com.

Community news notes

FRG training

Team 221st offers several Family Readiness Group training seminars throughout May in Room 22 at Army Community Service, Building 7790 in Hainerberg Housing. Classes include: Key Caller training, May 4 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.; Basic Leader Training, May 5 from 9-11 a.m.; Liaison Training May 12 from 5-7 p.m. and Treasurer Training May 18 from 5-7 p.m. Register at ACS or call mil 337-5034/5754 or civ (0611) 705-5034/5754.

Spouse appreciation

Team 221st Army Community Service salutes military spouses May 5-7. A cake cutting will be held at 11:30 a.m. at the Community Mailroom kicking off the celebration followed by a "Men are Spouses too Movie Night" from 6-9 p.m. at the Community Activity Center featuring the comedy "I was a Male War Bride" starring Cary Grant and Ann Sheridan. Network with family readiness group staff and other spouses May 6 during a "Supporting the Frontline on the Home Front" workshop from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The workshop features several seminars to choose from. A "Stress Spa for Spouses" will be held at the Dexheim ACS training room from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. May 7. To sign up for any of the Salute to Spouses activities stop by the Hainerberg and Dexheim ACS offices or call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

Spring Fun Run

Wiesbaden American Middle School hosts a community-wide Spring Fun Run May 12 at 3:30 p.m. Although students from Darmstadt, Heidelberg, Mannheim, Rhein Main and Hanau middle schools are participating, the event is free for all. Call mil 337-6251 or civ (0611) 705-6251 for more information.

Family fun

In conjunction with the Month of the Military Child, Army Community Service hosts

a Family Fun Night April 29 from 5-8 p.m. at the ACS cafeteria, Building 7790 in Hainerberg Housing. Bring the entire family for games, music and lots of fun. For more information call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

FRG input

Team 221st is seeking input from experienced Family Readiness Group leaders and community volunteers, both current and past, to compile a guide from the trenches of what works to make FRGs as useful and fun as possible. Suggestions such as, "make it fun," "be inclusive" and "stop rumors" are all great but lack specifics. Help us help you get the most out of your FRG. Give us a call at mil 337-5034/5754 or civ (0611) 705-5034/5754.

Dexheim classes

Army Community Service in Dexheim sponsors employment readiness workshops, newcomer's coffees, resume writing, newcomer's bus tours and sponsorship training throughout the month of March. For more information call mil 334-5716.

English classes

Army Community Service offers free English as a Second Language class every Thursday from 5-7 p.m. Sessions are May 12 to June 30, July 7 to Aug. 26, Sept. 1 to Oct. 20 and Oct. 27 to Dec. 15. To sign up or for more information call mil 337-5754 or civ (0611) 705-5754.

Blood drive

The European Regional Medical Command sponsors a blood drive May 13 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the first floor of the Tony Bass Fitness Center. Every two seconds, someone needs blood in the United States, but the supply does not always meet the demand. Donate blood and become someone's hero.

Couples communication

Learn skills for effective communication, conflict resolution and anger management to help you and your partner build a more satisfying relationship. Couples Communication workshops are held at Army Community Service, Building 7790, Room 23 in Hainerberg Housing. For assistance call mil 337-5297 or civ (0611) 705-5297.

EFMP support

Join the Exceptional Family Program support group the first Wednesday of each month from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 22 at Army Community Service, Building 7790 in Hainerberg Housing. Call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034 for more information.

Parents wanted

The Wiesbaden Middle School Parent Teacher Student Association is seeking members willing to serve on an elected PTSA board or as a sub-committee member. Elections are at 5:30 p.m. May 11 in the

school's media center. Nomination forms are available at both the Middle and Hainerberg Elementary school main offices and must be received by May 6. For more information call civ (06134) 284 224.

Camp registration

Team 221st Child and Youth Services hosts a nine-week summer camp through its School Age Services program. Camp begins June 20. Parents can enroll their child for the entire program or in two-week increments. Registration for youth currently enrolled in SAS ends May 13. An interest list for youth not enrolled in SAS will be available May 2-13. For more information call mil 337-6724 or civ (0611) 705-6724.

Graduation ceremony

A graduation ceremony of University of Phoenix students will be held June 26 in Heidelberg. All recent graduates and those within nine credits of completion are eligible to participate. Contact your academic counselor for questions regarding eligibility or email Vanessa.earl@phoenix.edu before May 15 to register.

Pre-deployment workshops

Army Community Service offers pre-deployment workshops from 6-7 p.m. for Soldiers and spouses the first, second and third Monday of the month in Room 22 at Building 7790 in

Hainerberg Housing and on the fourth Monday of the month at Dexheim ACS. Unit training is available on request. Workshops include a deployment guide, financial responsibilities, emergency information and stress management. For more information call mil 337-5034/5754 or civ (0611) 705-5034/5754.

Parenting help

The New Parent Education and Support Program offers a three-part series of workshops for new or soon-to-be parents. The series topics include: Childbirth experience—dealing with discomfort in labor; Breast-feeding—getting started and being successful and Postpartum/newborn care and safety. Registration is required for these workshops. Call mil 338-7835 or civ (0611) 532 9842 for more information.

Golf clinics

Rheinblick Golf Course offers several golf clinics for beginner and intermediate golfers of all ages. Clinics are held in a three- or four-part series and must be paid for in advance. For more information call mil 336-2816 or civ (0611) 420 675.

Family inprocessing

Spouse and family member inprocessing training is conducted by the 221st Base Support Battalion. Sessions are held every Friday from 9 a.m. to noon. Call mil 337-5034/5754 or civ (0611) 705-5034/5754 to sign up.

222nd BSB – Baumholder, Neubrück, Strassburg

Operation Purple Summer Camps

Children of deployed service members will have the opportunity to go to camp this summer here in Europe.

Operation Purple Camp Bavaria and Operation Purple Camp Italia will provide middle and high school students with week-long and all-expense-paid camps incorporating activities specifically related to coping with deployments.

Each camp features team building, recreational and leisure activities, creative art projects, a motivational speaker, forums for emotional awareness and self-expression, and more.

Operation Purple Camp Bavaria is designed to strengthen resiliency and coping skills through healthy social relationships.

Operation Purple Camp Italia is for middle school youth (grades six to eight), hosting one session on July 17-23 and another session July 24-30 both at Camp Darby, Italy. Operation Purple Camp Bavaria is for high school youth (grades nine to 12) with one session Aug. 21-27 and another Aug. 28 to Sept. 3, both in Garmisch.

Applications are available at local youth centers, and Army Community Service.

They must be submitted by May 15, and starting April 15 can be mailed (USA IMA-E/ATTN: IMEU-MWD-C/Unit 29353, Box 200/ APO AE 09014), emailed (purple@ima-e.army.mil) or faxed to mil 370-8491, civ (06221) 57-8491.

Happenings



Photo by LeAnne MacAllister
Sgt. Jamal Robinson from the 127th Military Police Company greets his wife Renee and son Andre during a welcome home ceremony April 2. The 127th MP Company has units stationed in Baumholder, Darmstadt and Wiesbaden.

School-Age Services summer camp

Families registered at School-Age Services can sign up May 2-13 for summer camp, scheduled for June 20 to Aug. 19 at Wetzel SAS. All other families may register May 16. Numerous activities and trips are planned for the Smith and Wetzel SAS combined summer camp. Camp registration will

follow priority placement requirements.

90th PSB closes

Alpha Detachment, 90th Personnel Services Battalion, will be minimally staffed April 29 to participate in the 90th Personnel Services Battalion's Family and Soldier Day. People who need assistance during this time may call mil 485-6199 or civ (06783) 66819.

Parenting programs

The Parents and Tots Playgroup meets from 10-11:30 a.m. Mondays and Fridays at the Iron Kids Play Room, Building 8222. Nurturing program sessions for parents and their infants, toddlers and preschoolers meets from 10 a.m. to noon Mondays at the Iron Kids indoor playground, Building 8222. Empowering Nurturing Parenting, offered May 5 and 19 from 10-11:30 a.m., is an ongoing support group for parents and their children who have graduated from the nurturing program.

- May 3, 17, Breastfeeding Class, 10 a.m. to noon.
- May 10, 24, Labor and

Delivery, 4-6 p.m.

Team building

The following Army Family Team Building sessions are scheduled for April:

- May 12-13, Level I, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- May 24-26, Level II, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Financial Readiness

Get a grip on your finances with the following classes:

- May 3, 17, Successful Money Management, 2-4 p.m.
- May 11, Out of Hock, Out of Debt, 9-11 a.m.
- May 25, On My Own, My Money — My Responsibility, 9-11 a.m.

Parenting

Army Community Service offers the following parenting programs:

- ☐ Coffee break, May 4, 11, 18 and 25, 10-11:30 a.m., Iron Kids Play Room, Building 8222.
- ☐ Parent and Tot Playgroup every Monday and Friday in May, 10-11:30 a.m., Iron Kids Play Room, Building 8222.
- ☐ Potty Training, April 14, 10-11:30 a.m., Iron Kids Play-

room, Building 8222.

Newcomers

Families Learning About Germany, or FLAG, offers its next orientation from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 9-11. This is an opportunity to become acquainted with your new host nation.

Host nation events

The following events are coming up in the local community:

- April 30, Raising of the Maypole/Witches Night, in all communities. Make sure all outdoor decorations are secure or they may be removed and placed in another location for you to find them.
- April 30, Hexenrock Night, Brühlhalle, Baumholder.
- May 14 and 15, Volksmarch at Baumholder.
- May 17 Maibowlenfest and Yale Alley Cats concert at Baumholder Brühlhalle.

For more information on these events call the 222nd Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office at mil 485-1600.

Youth Services

Youth Services is open Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The following events are offered in April and May:

- April 30, Month of the Military Child celebration featuring a barbecue, pool and foosball tournament, 3 on 3 basketball at the Underground for sixth- through eighth-grade students from 2-6 p.m. This event is free.

- May 7, Keystone Club Cinco De Mayo Dance at the Teen Cafe for ninth- through 12th-grade students, 7-11 p.m. This event is free.

- May 10-15, Asian Pacific Poster Contest at the Underground for sixth- through eighth-grade students, 2-8 p.m. This event is free.

- May 21, Middle School Lock-In at the Underground for sixth- through eighth-grade students, 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., \$10.

- May 28, Asian Pacific Celebration, Filipino Cooking at the Teen Cafe for ninth- through 12th-grade students, 5-9 p.m.

Call mil 485-7276 or civ (06783) 6-7276 for more information.

Museum dedicates OIF exhibit

By LeAnne MacAllister
222nd Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

An Iraqi street is blocked off by Soldiers of the 1st Armored Division. Insurgents are on the run and local Iraqis are trying to understand the situation at hand. Meanwhile, someone sees an insurgent creeping around the side of the building. He's out of sight of the Soldiers.

Family members, friends and the Baumholder community now have the opportunity to take a glimpse at what life was like downrange. Soldiers can take a look at what life was like back home while they were fighting for Iraqi freedom. The 1st Armored Division Museum gives the public a feel for what Soldiers of the 1st Armored Division faced daily in Iraq for 15 months between 2003 and 2004.

Baumholder's 1st AD Museum added a new gallery dedicated to the Operation Iraqi Freedom missions and memorialized the historic vehicle display park April 20.



Photo by LeAnne MacAllister

Steve Ruhnke, 1st AD Museum curator, examines the Operation Iraqi Freedom Gallery.

The gallery features Task Force 1st AD's service as an occupational force and includes exhibits depicting the battles against Sadr's army, training of Iraqi troops, humanitarian missions, reconstruction and operations on the home front in Germany. In addition, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team's mission when attached to the 3rd Infantry Division in the early stages of OIF is highlighted. The division's honors, awards and

leadership achievements are also displayed.

"Soldiers and families will be able to closely identify with the exhibit as it reflects current operations and reflects their own personal and unit contributions in the Army's campaign in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Regardless where the division will be sent to in CONUS, the 1st AD Museum will endure and move with the division colors. It will remain a rally point for all those who have served in this great division for generations, past and future," said Brig. Gen. Michael Tucker, 1st AD assistant division commander.

The historic vehicle park is

dedicated to the eight Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, who died while serving on a patrol in Baghdad April 29, 2004.

Steve Ruhnke, 1st AD Museum curator, organized efforts for the new gallery. "We decided that, after the Soldiers had returned, we wanted to do this. We wanted to honor our Soldiers and their experience," said Ruhnke.

The museum faced the problem of a lack of exhibition space. "We had to do some rearranging and temporarily eliminate other exhibits that will be consolidated later to make room for the OIF exhibit," he said.

Soldiers, family members and units have been instrumental in the collection of artifacts. "We received artifacts even before their return, and as we built our artifact collection, realized the need and importance of creating this gallery. The final design was completed in January, and then we implemented it," said Ruhnke.

"This exhibit will recognize and accurately document the enormous achievements of Iron Soldiers and their families during Operation Iraqi Freedom," said Tucker.

Ruhnke said the OIF gal-

lery could not have been completed without the assistance of the division. "We received support from the entire division. Brig. Gen. Michael Tucker was especially instrumental in coordinating efforts and getting momentum behind the exhibit," said Ruhnke.

"After our protracted deployment the museum needed some assistance in order to acquire the necessary resources they needed to bring the museum back to life.

"The museum staff was highly motivated and anxious to get started. They just needed some help. Besides, after 18 years on Old Ironsides, the 1st AD Museum has always been a priority for me, personally.

"This exhibit as well as the entire 1st AD Museum should be a source of honor and pride for those who have served this great division. We are currently working plans to include a visit to the 1st AD Museum during a Soldier's inprocessing into the division," said Tucker.

The OIF gallery is on display during regular museum hours, Wednesdays through Saturdays 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sundays 1-5 p.m., closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Local AFAP issues go to USAREUR level

Army Family Action Plan delegates from Baumholder took with them 10 local issues for consideration at the annual 104th Area Support Group AFAP conference March 22 and nine of those issues were selected to go forward for further consideration at the Army Europe AFAP Conference.

Baumholder shared three issues with the other communities in the 104th ASG, causing those issues to be combined.

A total of twelve issues from the 104th ASG were selected to be presented at the next level.

After the European conference, selected issues will be submitted to the Department of the Army AFAP Con-

ference in November.

The nine issues from Baumholder that will be presented at the Army Europe AFAP Conference in May are:

- Educational program for preschool-age children
- Mental health providers for deployments
- Voluntary pregnancy separation for "first-time" military mothers
- Child care staffing
- Deployed vs. non-deployed family activities
- Housing options for families of deploying/deployed soldiers
- Soldier meal-card holders
- Youth fitness centers usage
- Drivers' testing for family members

Yale Alley Cats coming to town

The renowned all-male a cappella singing group, the Yale Alley Cats, perform at 7 p.m. May 17 at the Brühlhalle in Baumholder. Tickets are €6 in advance, €8 at the door. Discount student tickets are €3.

Advance tickets are available at the city administration office, bookstore Grimm, bookstore Edinger and at the Esso gas station in Baumholder.

The Yale Alley Cats, now in their 61st year, have a diverse musical repertoire that reflects the group's tradition and flexibility. From their humble beginnings as a barbershop quartet of crooning Yalies in 1943, the Alley Cats have evolved to become one of the most famous

all-male a cappella singing groups in the nation.

Their repertoire comprises a blend of styles including jazz, traditional ballads and popular songs, as well as traditional Yale songs and a good dose of humor, according to promotional material.

In recent years they have performed for royalty in Monaco, at five star hotels in East Asia, circumnavigated the globe on a world tour and performed on national television.

The group is anticipating a year of performances in the Northeast, California and Hawaii. This summer the Alley Cats will embark on a month-long international tour. With tradi-

tion, professionalism and talent an Alley Cat performance combines the best that Yale has to offer, according to press materials.

For more information on how to obtain tickets for the local performance May 22 call the 222nd Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office at mil485-1600.

New APO location benefits all

By Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

222nd Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

After 52 years of service out of the same location the military post office has packed up its stamp collection and closed its doors to the Baumholder military community.

That's how long it took the APO to move out of Building 8667 next to the traffic circle to a more spacious facility in Building 8661 adjacent to the community mailroom.

A dedication ceremony is scheduled for April 28 at 10 a.m. Although the APO actually opened its doors at its new location in mid March, the official dedication was postponed until the Soldiers and civilian employees ironed out the kinks of working out of a new facility.

The dedication ceremony also serves to recognize the service the APO Soldiers and civilians provide to the community.

"I think the Soldiers and civilians need to be recognized for the work that they do. So I was adamant about having this dedication ceremony," said 1st Lt. Erika D. Stevenson, postal officer and platoon leader of the Baumholder and Strassburg APOs.

Stevenson said it was time to move. "The building had not had any renovations or remodeling to it since about 1950. It was dark, the walls were brown, it was dirty, it was old, the ceiling was falling in on us and the sewage system had issues with it so the smell was present throughout the post office. So coming to work was kind of a bummer. So for the employees it's a big morale booster, because it's a new facility and it's clean," she said.

For the customers the new location means they now have one-stop mail service available because the APO's move collocated it with the community mailroom.

"That cuts down on running from the APO to the CMR to pick up your packages. Now you can mail a package at the APO and then walk across to pick up your mail at the CMR instead of having to drive, like you had to do originally. Also the hours for the CMR have changed slightly to reflect the times of the APO," said Stevenson.

The APO hours are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. They are also



Photo by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

Pfc. Jeremy Coon serves a customer and gets on-the-job training from Jennifer Gatling.

open on training holidays.

The new location is also a time-saver for APO and CMR employees. Previously CMR employees would jump in their vehicles and drive down to the APO to pick up mail that was dispatched to them. "Now all we have to do is just knock on the door and they come into our hallway and pick up their mail," said Stevenson.

Like any budding relationship, the APO and CMR have a few growing pains to deal with. "It gets a little crowded in here, especially when we have a big truck with a lot of mail on it. We're still trying to work out a few kinks, like where are we going to put all the CMR mail and still get our mail out to the community," said Stevenson.

The operations section where all the mail is processed off the trucks was actually bigger in the old building. "Because we are now sharing our space with the CMR, our operations section was bigger in the old building. But this one works a little better because, like I said, the CMR (staff) does not have to drive down and pick up their mail. All they have to do is push it on a cart into the CMR area and we're done with it.

"So it works both ways. But I think that in the end it's going to be a vast improvement. So please be patient with us as we go through this period of transition," said Stevenson.

In the wake of their move Stevenson is starting a new

service for the APO's customers. "I'm working on a customer suggestion and comment box for the lobby, because I've noticed that there are a lot of customers who'll come up to me and say, 'Hey why don't you have this? Why don't you change your hours to stay open later,'" said Stevenson.

On the topic of operation hours, Stevenson explained that it was not possible to align the APO hours to that of the CMR.

"Our hours will not change to reflect the CMR's. The CMR stays open until 6 p.m. That is not possible for us, because we do not have the manpower, and secondly, we don't have enough overtime to pay our civilians to do that. So our hours will stay firm," said Stevenson. She noted that if the APO Soldiers deploy, the APO hours may have to be scaled back. "We might not be open every Saturday, so I just need the community to understand that we're trying the best we can, and to please be patient," she said.

The APO has a staff of 12 Soldiers and seven civilians. It's easy to understand that the upcoming deployment will have an impact on postal operations.

"When the Soldiers deploy, the APO will be severely short staffed. We'll get ready to deploy roughly around the start of the Christmas mailing season which is our busiest time of

the year," said Stevenson. In order to continue serving the community during deployments the APO is usually augmented with Soldiers from other APOs or Soldiers from other units in Baumholder who help out for about two months during the APO's peak season.

"They'll help out in our operations area with getting the mail off the trucks, so we can get it out faster to the community," said Stevenson.

However the civilians will be pulling most of the work. "They pick up our slack when we have to go off to train, when we get tasked to do something on the spur of the moment, when we have to go to sergeant's time training, command maintenance, SRPs or briefings," said Stevenson.

But it won't be all doom and gloom for APO operations when the Soldiers deploy, because traditionally the Baumholder community steps in and volunteers to help keep the mail moving.

"I've had people come and ask me if they could volunteer their services at the APO. Thomas Allen, the postmaster, and I look over each application and select volunteers to help out. Like I said, we do receive help from the community, from other units and from volunteers. So postal service to the Baumholder community will continue, regardless of any shortfalls in staffing or any other circumstances," she said.

APO makes way for bargain hunters

By Ignacio “Iggy”
Rubalcava

222nd Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

Some 52 years ago blacksmiths put their hammers down and hung up their aprons to make way for first class mail.

Now the mail has been re-routed to make room for bargain hunters. The Baumholder APO has moved out of its longtime location in Building 8667, which is believed to originally have housed a blacksmith shop and is now targeted as the future home for the Baumholder Community Spouses Club Thrift Shop.

For at least 52 years the APO served its customers out of the same location in Building 8667 next to the traffic circle. The APO is now collocated with the community mail room in Building 8661. The earliest records the Directorate of Public Works has of this building is a voucher dated 1953 requesting the extension of the post office in Building 8667.

Given that the German



Photo by Ignacio “Iggy” Rubalcava

Was the old APO building a blacksmith shop for the horses used to pull German cannons?

Reich started building what is now Smith Barracks in 1936, it is probably safe to assume that the APO occupied the building at least 30 years longer than any of its original tenants.

Details of the building’s history before 1953 are a little sketchy but according to Horst

Bier and Herbert Grimm, two senior residents of the city of Baumholder, the building once housed a blacksmith and key shop.

Bier worked for the U.S. military in Baumholder for 40 years as the chief of engineering, plans and services. Grimm has written two books about the

history of Baumholder and another about 50 years of German and American relations in the Baumholder community. Both books are written in German and English.

Since the entire row of buildings behind the old APO was once horse stalls where the backbone of a German ar-

tillery unit was quartered, it stands to reason the APO’s old location was once a place where horses dropped in for a little hoof work. The two red-brick chimney stacks in front of the building further support Bier’s and Grimm’s theory.

Currently, the old horse stalls behind the APO’s old location are home to SATO, AAFES Garden Center, Toy Store and Power Zone.

The headquarters for the old artillery unit was where the community bank and credit union are currently located.

Grimm said all the buildings east of Prussman Avenue originally housed German infantry units and everything west of Prussman Avenue was home to the German artillery unit.

History seems to have repeated itself, because that’s pretty much the way it is today with the 1st Armored Division Artillery on the east side and the 2nd Brigade on the west side of the road.

Validate your debt before paying

Leveling playing field for debt collection

By Capt. Alison
Gregoire

Legal Assistance attorney

When you receive a debt collection letter it is hard to know what to do first. Do you begin calling and asking for the debt to be reduced? Do you start taking a hard look at your assets to determine how you will pay the debt? Before you take either of those steps you should begin by asking that the collection agency validate the debt to prove they are legally entitled to collect the debt in the first place.

The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act covers all debt collection agencies. The Act covers those companies who were assigned or have purchased your debt from the original creditor. Thus the act covers agencies such as AAA Collections and law firms such as Smith, Jones and Reed, which are collecting debts.

If you ask for validation of your debt in writing within 30 days of receipt of the debt collection letter, the agency must provide you with proof that you owe them the debt. This

includes proof the agency has been assigned the debt and is legally entitled to collect the debt from you. It also includes your payment history and a copy of the original contract between you and the creditor.

A debt collector who can-

not verify a debt is not allowed to collect a debt, to contact you about the debt or to report the debt to a credit bureau. The FDCPA allows for \$1,000 in damages from the debt collector if the debt collector does not validate the debt, yet con-

tinues to contact you or report the information.

If you have any questions about disputing a debt or whether information received from a debt collector constitutes verification, call your legal office at mil 485-6506.

Island Dancers bring Asian-Pacific flare

The Island Dancers bring some Asian Pacific flare to Baumholder May 20 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Wagon Wheel Theater. The dance group comes to Baumholder to help the community observe Asian-Pacific

Heritage Month.

Baumholder’s Equal Opportunity advisers seek volunteers to help with cooking for the event. They will provide ingredients. To volunteer call Sgt. 1st Class Julien Hayden at mil 485-6510.